

Special Advertisements

In another column we publish a carefully-prepared and useful comparison of the imports and exports of Victoria and New South Wales, which appeared in the *Argus* of Tuesday. It is a further proof that our friends in Victoria are at last thoroughly awaking to the significance of the facts that underlie these figures. It is indeed startling to find that in 1884 the Victorian imports exceeded the exports by £11,703,020, whilst in New South Wales there was not only an excess of imports, but positively an excess of exports of £722,337. To give

our contemporary—what Victoria has procured by borrowing New South Wales has received simply by larger productivity." That is the position in a nutshell. This colony has imported freely, but it has been able to pay for her purchases in Victoria, on the other hand, whilst importing with even greater freedom than ourselves, remains in debt for a very large proportion of her imports. A time when borrowing is generally one of the most often extravagant, expenditure, and there results an appearance of prosperity of a very deceptive character. Victoria has been under this deceptive influence for three or four years, and the consequence is that she has committed, and is committing, a vast and an increasing error, largely in excess of that for 1884. The flow of new capital into Victoria is checked, and the inflation of which we speak, has a vitalist order. Wladis-

The other day we quoted an spirited Customs return of the duty paid on exports with

20·6 per cent. within the decade. The second batch of Customs statistics relative to the duty paid on wine and beer during the last nine years presents features that will be regarded with less satisfaction by teetotalers. It is true the consumption of wine, which in 1873 was 172,844 gallons, was in 1889 only 170,626 gallons, the rate of consumption in the earlier year being 22 gallons per head, and in the later 0·318 per cent. But it is certain that the beer consumed in the colony during the same period was 1,339 gallons, which is taking the place of the imported article. Until, however, we obtain more definite particulars on this head, which are perhaps impossible to be obtained except through the operation of Excise provisions, it will be impossible to note the increase or otherwise of wine-drinking. It is to be noticed, however, that the decrease in the duty-paid wine is on still wine only. Whatever our colonial vignerons may have done, they have not yet succeeded in making sparkling wine in quantities sufficient to arrest the growing importation of foreign wine of this description, as the total import increased from 15,400 gallons in 1873 to 18,139 gallons in 1889. But the public have begun to appreciate the still wines of the colony, and it may be questioned whether the Collector of Customs will obtain any further increase of duty from the imported wine. The consumption of English beer, however,

shows a very marked increase in quantity in 1881, amounting to 1,070,440 gallons, and in 1882 to 1,200,000 gallons per head, while in 1880 the quantity was 2,574,616 gallons, or 2·24 gallons per head, but an increase of 0·3 per cent. The large increase in the consumption of beer has been going on steadily through the whole period, and has apparently neither been retarded nor accelerated by the imposition of the excise duties. The quantity of colonial beer consumed seems also to be increasing, the quantity in 1880 having been 9,300,100 gallons, and in 1898 9,512,200 gallons. The quantity exported as colonial beer in 1898 was 1,209,815 gallons, or 10·7 gallons per head. The exact figures for the United Kingdom cannot be stated, but deducting the export from the production of beer, the

Economist gives 28,010,000, and that of about 27 gallons per head per annum, or 27,000,000 gallons, for the year ending 31st March, 1888. If, then, we consume about one-third more spirits in the colony than in the mother country, we consume only about two-fifths of the quantity of beer. But the nine years' return would imply that the consumption of imported beer is growing very rapidly in the colony. Our drinking bill shows that whiskey and grain spirits are supplanting brandy and rum; that of the whole there is a decrease in the consumption of spirits, but that beer-drinking is increasing. One reason given for the substitution of whiskey for brandy is that of cheapness, and it is thought also that economical considerations are causing beer to be consumed in the place of spirits.

The English mails, dated London, 17th January by the long sea route, and 24th via Italy, by Orient Company's steamer Ormus, will be due tomorrow in time for delivery at about 2 p.m. The H.M. Frigate *Porpoise* will open the mail dog ship at Balmain today.

Mrs. J. H. CARUTHERS, the Minister for Public Instruction, with whom were Messrs. Wilshear, Farewell, Dale, and Ritchie, M.L.A.s, opened a girls' school at Liverpool yesterday afternoon.

According to arrangement, Mr. Mc'MILLIN will proceed to Katoomba by to-day's express, for stay of a week or 10 days.

Two deputations fixed for to-day are as follows:—To the Colonial Secretary, at 11 a.m., a deputation from the Friendly Societies Association; to the Hon. Mr. Carrington, at 11 a.m., the Vigilance Committee of Wexon's Bar respecting a recreation ground; to the Minister for Works, at noon, a deputation from Richmond concerning the local water supply.

The Government has received through Sir Sars

OMBUSH, THIS DAY, at 10 o'clock.

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